

*Sheriff's Offices in Assumption, St. Mary, and Iberia Parishes to Receive Federal Funding*  
September 1, 2010

WASHINGTON – Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced today that four federal law enforcement grants totaling \$318,810 have been awarded to the sheriffs' departments in Assumption, St. Mary and Iberia parishes and to the Louisiana State Police. The investments announced today will support innovative projects and continue funding successful initiatives, many of which focus on improving law enforcement's ability to serve Louisiana communities during natural disasters and other emergencies.

**"Louisiana's law enforcement officers are on the front lines during natural disasters and emergencies,"** said Rep. Melancon. **"As we remember Hurricanes Katrina and Rita five years ago, and continue coping with the current BP oil disaster in the Gulf, Louisianians recognize how important emergency response and readiness are to the safety of our communities."**

**"These investments in our local sheriff's departments will help provide the equipment and resources our law enforcement officers need to communicate in local and state emergencies, providing better protection for our families."**

Three of the [Department of Justice](#) grants will provide local law enforcement with funds to upgrade equipment and expand resources within the sheriff's department.

- **\$23,299 to the St. Mary Parish Sheriff's Office** to purchase equipment and supplies for local law enforcement and community corrections programs.

- **\$57,257 to the Iberia Sheriff's Department and the city of New Iberia** to purchase mobile radios, GPS speaker microphones, and rapid chargers to replace the analog radios currently being used.

- **\$15,894 to the Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office** to purchase p25 compatible radio equipment to cripple drug trafficking through increased information sharing and communications with state and federal drug enforcement agencies.

**Assumption Parish Sheriff Michael Waguespack** said that their grant will allow the department to acquire between five and eight portable or mobile radio units. These units will allow the officers to share information with other law enforcement agencies, such as the State Police, Office of Emergency Preparedness and neighboring parishes' sheriff's departments.

Sheriff Waguespack said, **"This equipment definitely adds to our ability to communicate during an emergency situation, natural disaster or incident of significance. In fact, we put some of these radios to use in our response to the oil spill, when we were**

**communicating with five to six different agencies that were on the scene.”**

These investments for the St. Mary, Iberia, and Assumption Sheriff’s Offices are funded through the U.S. Department of Justice’s [Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program](#) , which supports an array of initiatives to prevent and control local crime based on state and local needs. Congressman Melancon voted to fund the Byrne Grant Program when he supported the Fiscal Year 2010 Justice Department Appropriations Act.

Congressman Melancon also announced today a federal investment of \$222,360 for the Louisiana State Police. The grant, awarded through the Department of Justice’s “Solving Cold Cases with DNA” program, will support the State Police’s work to continue investigating 157 “open” homicide cases dating back to 1976.

**“Our public safety is strengthened by the ability of our law enforcement officials to bring criminals to justice, especially when a life is taken,”** said Rep. Melancon. **“The Louisiana State Police have made a commitment to the victims’ families and to the communities they serve to solve these crimes, but all too often the needed resources aren’t available. This grant will help these investigations continue without overwhelming the state’s budget.”**

The grant will also provide funding to access new forensic resources, relieving pressure from the State’s facilities. Investigators will now be able to submit samples of potential DNA evidence to out-of-state facilities.

Colonel Michael D. Edmonson, Superintendent of the Louisiana State Police and Deputy Secretary of Public Safety Services said, **“We are pleased to have been awarded this important grant by the Department of Justice. This funding will enable our crime lab to provide additional investigative tools to those law enforcement agencies who are diligently working on unsolved homicides in the Baton Rouge area. Our goal is to bring closure to the families of those victims and bring justice to those who committed these horrible crimes.”**

The grant for the Louisiana State Police is being funded through the [National Institute of Justice](#)’s [“Solving Cold Cases with DNA” program](#) under the U.S. Department of Justice.

Congressman Melancon has been a strong supporter in Congress of local law enforcement. He has introduced the [First Responders Act](#) , legislation to enhance disability benefits for public safety officers who have been permanently and totally disabled by a catastrophic injury sustained in the line of duty. U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu (D-La.) has introduced companion legislation in the Senate, and the bills have been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police.

###